

Each lord selected some of his quasi-related dependent men and made them his lieutenants. A lieutenant¹⁴ was responsible for carrying out his lord's instructions and helped in keeping the peace within the segment. Thus a dispute between two people in the same segment was referred in the first instance to the lieutenants of their lord, who reported their decision on the matter to him. If agreement could not be reached the matter was referred to the lieutenants of the lord's lord, that is, to the next superior segment, and so on until the matter came before the Paramount Chief. A lord could override the decision of his lieutenants if he wished. The Paramount Chief's lieutenants were responsible for administering the poison ordeal (*mwavi*) when accusations of sorcery were made or when there was no other evidence.¹⁵

In the Nguni lineage, new inferior segments were formed mainly by differentiation between brothers, or between sons of different mothers. These types of differentiation occurred in the residential system and gave rise to new primal segments but alongside other processes of segmentation. The Nguni division of wives into great, right- and left-hand was developed into an arrangement whereby a man with many wives and many followers divided his wives into *bevis*¹⁶ of some half a dozen wives each and allocated his followers to specific bevis. Each leader of a bevy had her junior co-wives, her own and their sons, and her lieutenants and other dependants acquired by capture. Each of these groups of followers under a senior wife constituted a separate segment and we shall refer to the wife in charge of a segment of this kind as the lady (*nkosikazi*) of the segment. Sons, lieutenants and even quasi-related dependants who were not lieutenants were all able to found inferior segments of their own within their lady's segment. Thus with the passage of time every flourishing segment became subdivided internally into several inferior segments, and in addition there was often what we shall term a *rump*, consisting of dependants not allocated to any inferior segment.

Most of the Nguni settlements were small, but on their march north the Ngoni lived in large compact villages containing over a thousand huts and several thousand inhabitants. Within these large villages people were arranged in terms of their segmentary affiliation and it is for this reason that we have spoken of a 'residential' system. The members of each small primal segment lived

¹⁴ *Nduna*, pl. *nduna*. cf. Zulu *induna*.

¹⁵ See Wiese, 'Expedição', pp. 470, 472, and 'Geschichte', pp. 188, 190.

¹⁶ In earlier publications I used the term 'band' in place of 'bevy'. See my *Marriage*, p. iii.

and is not to be treated as if he were the mere husband of a kinswoman. Indeed, all marital affairs of chiefs tend to have political significance; they are much discussed in the tribe and are the particular concern of senior lieutenants of counties. A recent incident illustrates how in relations with his affines a chief is bound by the instructions of his political advisers. A chief hit his wife while drinking beer in her brother's house. Her father reprimanded him. At a meeting held to discuss the quarrel, the county lieutenants and a kinsman of the chief, his father's deputy, ordered the woman's father to pay two beasts to the chief. The chief himself said nothing. A week or so later the man offered the beasts to the chief who said he did not want them. Just over a year later the chief's kinsman complained to the chief that the beast¹² had not been paid. The chief replied that he did not want the cattle and that at the meeting he had wanted his wife's father to be merely cautioned. His kinsman said that despite this he would call the lieutenants who had taken the original decision and get them to ask the woman's father why he had not paid. Hearing this, the man offered a beast which was accepted.¹³

Thus it is the chief in his position as head of a major segment and a county who is honoured with beer and whose marriages are protected, and not the chief as a bibulous aristocrat. The chief himself does not drink all, or even any, of the beer presented to him but he is responsible for dispensing it. A chief who acts like a commoner and wanders through his villages seeking beer risks the reprimands of his lieutenants, for it is difficult to refuse a chief beer under those conditions. A chief should not visit his people's villages unless they invite him, or unless he has at least warned them of his intention.

The gifts received by a chief from returned labour migrants are sometimes cited as a modern form of tribute, but while these presents may be more expensive in pecuniary terms than beer, they do not have the same great social importance. The shirt or hat presented by a man recently back from Southern Rhodesia may bring him favourable attention from the chief, but the present is made by an individual and arises from his own political aspirations. So far as I could tell, such presents are not effective as bribes. On the other hand, the presentation of beer is an affirmation of a relationship between a social group, often a village or division, and a political office, and most of those affected directly

¹² At the meeting two beasts were asked for, but a year later only one beast was mentioned.

¹³ cf. Barnes, *Marriage*, for the political significance of affinal ties.